



# VILLAGE OF ROBBINS – TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL AREA PLAN

## VISIONING WORKSHOP DISCUSSION GUIDE



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May 18, 2019

@Beady13

# AGENDA

1:30. Food & Registration

2:00. Welcome - *Mayor Tyrone Ward*

*Trustee Bernard Ward*

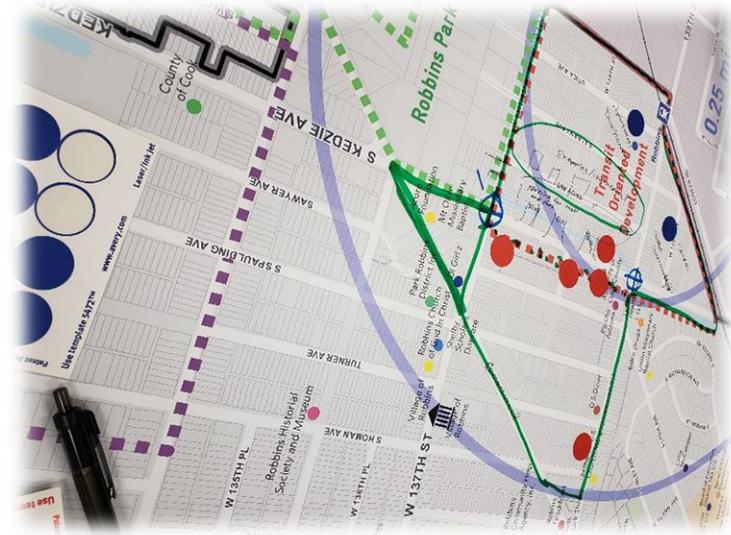
*Trustee Ernest Maxey*

2:15. Intro to the Robbins TOD & Industrial Plan

*Kelwin Harris, Senior Outreach Planner, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)*

2:30. Open House Exercises

3:50. Closing Remarks



# HOUSING



## Assets and Opportunities

- **There is potential for new rental units for a number of different family types and income.** Robbins can support new rental units with the right kind of amenities that can attract people to the community.
- **There is demand for new homes and apartments in Robbins.** Increasing the supply of quality housing is vital for investment. As Robbins gains more amenities, like Robbins Park, the demand for homes will increase.
- **Robbins owns a lot of available land.** Robbins owns a large amount of vacant land that can be used for all kinds of development.
- **Robbins residents are committed to the community.** The majority of homeowners moved into their homes over 20 years ago. The village also has numerous organized Block Clubs and a strong social fabric.

## Questions

1. Is the cost of housing a major problem?
2. What would you consider the biggest barrier to home ownership in Robbins (i.e. taxes, affordability)?
3. How would you describe the current housing stock in Robbins? What types of housing are missing?
4. How should the plan address the issue of dilapidated properties and vacant homes?
5. What are some near-term approaches to enhancing the attractiveness of highly vacant areas?



## Potential Strategies

- **Developers should apply for Low Income Housing Tax Credits** through the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) in order to market homes to a variety of income levels and maintain affordability.
- **Collaborate with the Cook County Land Bank Authority, and the South Suburban Land Bank Development Authority** to acquire tax delinquent properties and assemble land for redevelopment.
- **Consider the use of Tax increment Financing (TIF)** to activate desired areas for development. Portions of the study area should be explored as potential TIF Districts to support land acquisition and assembly, rehabilitation, and development.
- **Target a mix of income and family types.** The market can support a variety of family types throughout the study area and village.
- **Establish a homeownership financial empowerment program** tailored to the needs of Robbins residents. The program could focus on helping current residents afford to stay in their homes, as well as promote homeownership to longtime residents.

## Community Input

- **Housing affordability is a significant burden for residents and can stretch family budgets thin.**
- **Create more attractive and affordable housing including: townhomes, senior and multifamily units.**
- **Create new development around the Robbins Metra Station and activity leading to Robbins Park.**
- **Create mixed-use buildings for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with shops on the ground floor.**
- **Incorporate the history of Robbins when it was in its “heyday” with abundant street-life and economic activity.**

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Assets and Opportunities:

- **There is potential for small-scale convenience retail around the Robbins Metra Station** – The proposed Robbins Park will reduce flooding risks and create opportunity for a variety of uses like: quick casual restaurants, convenience stores and potentially larger developments.
- **Kedzie Ave. has a high potential for larger retail and other uses** – With its high traffic count and visibility, the west side of Kedzie Ave. could attract shops catering to residents and truck traffic like laundromats, dry cleaners, or a grocery store.
- **Robbins can attract shoppers from all over the area** - Approximately \$130m is spent at retailers and restaurants in surrounding places like Crestwood. Robbins can capture some of this market over time.

## Community Feedback:

- **Reactivate Claire Blvd. as the historic “Downtown” of Robbins.**
- **Bring investment to Robbins so residents don’t have to leave for basic needs.**
- **Create more shops and stores around the Metra Station.**
- **Beautify the neighborhood to make it more attractive for investment, including: better lighting, streetscaping and signage.**



## Questions:

1. Where would you like to see new stores and development along Kedzie Ave.?
2. Where would you like to see new stores and development along Claire Blvd.?
3. What kinds of shops would be most desired around the Metra station?
4. Where would you place a larger scale new development (i.e. Grocery Store) for walkability and convenience?
5. Are there local entrepreneurs and small business owners you’d like to see open shops here?

## Potential Strategies:

- **Assemble land for major new developments.** Assemble parcels to be marketed for a large development or retailer.
- **Attract small businesses and social enterprises.** Social enterprise models have been proven to kick-start retail while adding a social service component that supports residents and families at all income levels. They can include coffee shops and restaurants with a job training component.
- **A new sports facility could be a draw for investment in Robbins.** Facilities where people can exercise, recreate and participate in team sports can be effective in attracting people to the community and encouraging more economic development.
- **Utilize incentives to attract development.** Offering reduced rents to new businesses, ground leases or even land for free should be explored to get the market started in addition to tax incentives offered by Cook County.
- **Explore urban agriculture and locally-sourced “farm-to-table” products.** Urban agriculture can generate jobs while reclaiming vacant lots for healthy food. In this respect, urban agriculture can also be a good interim bridge use for vacant land, possibly in the TOD area, while awaiting other kinds of development.



## Questions:

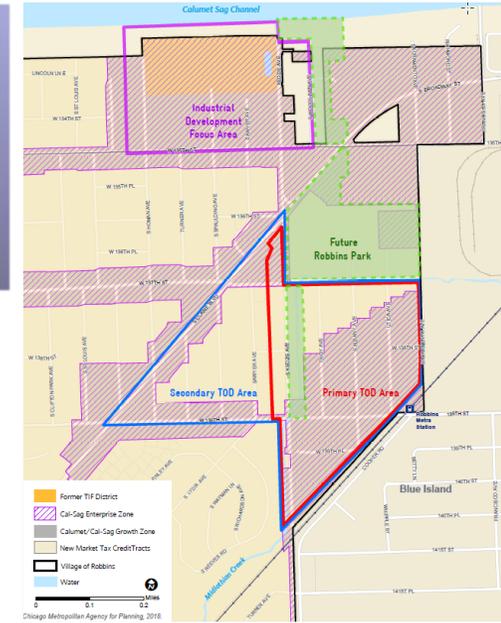
1. What kind of industries would you like to see come to Robbins?
2. What industries would create the most jobs in Robbins?
3. What industries would be cleanest for the environment in Robbins?
4. What, if any, are some of your concerns with new industries coming to Robbins?

## Potential Strategies:

- **Update the zoning code** – Update the Village’s zoning code to align with future development goals to prepare for desired development.
- **Market the advantages of locating industry in Robbins** - The study area should be actively marketed to a variety of developers and industry organizations.
- **Explore job training programs** – The Illinois Office of Employment and Training and numerous other organizations have a variety of trade and apprenticeship programs to prepare residents for jobs.

## Community Feedback:

- **Attract businesses with jobs and training** – Robbins residents expressed their desire for a job training facility or a technical/trade school along with resources to develop residents’ skill sets and expand their employment opportunities.
- **Residents are open to a variety of development types** – Residents would like to see a variety of industrial uses considered including: a recycling center, light industrial park, businesses incubator space for manufacturing startups, or technical or trade schools.
- **Industries would locate in Robbins if there was space** – Local developers have expressed that Robbins would be an ideal location for numerous industries but the lack of industrial space is discouraging.



## Assets and Opportunities:

- **Robbins industrial sites are easily accessible by a number of modes of transportation.** Robbins has great access to highways, rail yards, airports, rail lifts and barge access attractive for many industries.
- **Robbins can support a variety of industrial developments.** A wide array of industries are suitable in Robbins, like: manufacturing and industrial flex space, industrial parks, anaerobic digesters and community solar among others.
- **Robbins has available land that can be used for job creating development** — Available land along the Calumet River and the Metra station are available for short or long term uses.
- **There are a number of existing incentive programs that can promote development** – A variety of incentive programs are available at the local, county, state, and national levels such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Cook County Tax incentives, along with established programs such as the Cal-Sag Enterprise Zone, and Cal Sag Industrial Growth Zone.

# TRANSPORTATION AND TRAILS

## Assets and Opportunities:

- **Robbins has abundant transportation options.** Interstates 57 and 294 are both in close proximity and the village has a relatively new Metra station and parking lot. The Cal-Sag River is also accessible for goods transport and recreation. Bus transit can be improved, as the current routes do not extend to the Metra station.
- **Robbins is walkable.** Although many residential streets are in poor condition and lack traditional sidewalks, curbs or gutters, most places - like, churches, businesses, the post office, and library - can be accessed by no more than a 15 to 20 minute walk from the Metra station.
- **Connections to existing bike trails can improve bikeability.** Connections to current and proposed area trails such as the Cal-Sag Trail and Natalie Creek Trail can make walking and biking more convenient.



## Questions:

1. Do you utilize Metra or Pace? If yes, to where? If no, why not?
2. Would you use Metra more often if the station had improvements like lighting, benches, a coffee shop or bookstore, etc.?
3. Do you walk or ride a bike around Robbins? Why/why not? What improvements (and where?) would encourage you to walk/bike more?
4. Where do you shop and how do you get there?



## Community Feedback:

- **Beautify the Metra station.** Benches, lighting, and landscaping would make the Metra station area more attractive and inviting.
- **Getting to the Metra Station can be difficult.** Many residents noted that improved sidewalks and crosswalks would make access easier and more desirable.
- **Make Robbins Park accessible for pedestrians coming from the train station.** Connections should be made for pedestrians coming from the Metra station and walking to the proposed Robbins Park.
- **Extend bus service to Metra Station.** Currently pedestrians have to walk from Kedzie Ave. to the Metra station. The community desires an extension of bus service to connect all the way to the station.
- **Look at the potential for “Complete Streets” in Robbins.** Streets that are attractively designed for pedestrian-friendly walking and biking.

## Potential Strategies:

- **Coordinate partners to prioritize investments.** Robbins and partners should coordinate investments and planning decisions to maximize local improvements when possible.
- **Pursue grant funding for capital improvements.** Partners and Robbins leadership should pursue grant funding for capital improvements and help identify sources for assistance.
- **Identify ways to build capacity.** Identify financial resources and human capital needed to implement planning recommendations and pursue economic development goals.

# Mapping Exercise

## Housing

Indicate where you would like to see future residential development:

- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer to see single-family homes (including townhomes and row houses)
- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer multifamily homes/apartments
- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer to see mixed-use buildings (residential and commercial)

\* Use **markers** to color in priority vacant blocks that should be addressed in the near term.

## Industrial

Indicate where you would like to see future industrial development:

- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer to see heavy industrial
- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer light industrial
- 1 x  – Write down what kind of industry would you like to see in Robbins and locate it on the map

## Economic Development

Indicate where you would like to see economic development:

One dot for each street (Claire Blvd. and Kedzie Ave.)

- 2 x  – (1 for Claire Blvd. and 1 for Kedzie Ave.) – Where you'd prefer new shops and development.
- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer to see convenience shops and development around train station
- 1 x  – Where you'd prefer to see a large development (i.e. Grocery Store, Sports Facility), etc.

## Transportation and Trails

Indicate where you would like to see future transportation improvement:

- 1 x  - Where you'd prefer to see new or improved sidewalk or trail
- 1 x  - Where you'd prefer to install new or improve existing crosswalk
- 1 x  - Where you'd prefer to see on-street bikeway
- 1 x  - Where you'd prefer to see a new bus shelter

